

WRITING

Narrative Marking Guide

Rubric
pages 1–15

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Assessing Writing in the National Assessment Program

The writing task

The writing task for this test is a narrative. It is the same task for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The administration of the writing tasks employs closely scripted scaffolding. The teacher reads the directions on the writing prompt aloud to all students. The prompt includes images which can support students in crafting their response. Students have 5 minutes to plan, 30 minutes to write and 5 minutes to edit.

Definition

The following definition of the social purposes of the narrative has shaped the development of the criteria. It has also shaped the delineation of the essential structural components required for the task.

A narrative is a time-ordered text that is used to narrate events and to create, entertain and emotionally move an audience. Other social purposes of narrative writing may be to inform, to persuade and to socialise. The main structural components of a narrative are the orientation, the complication and the resolution.

Criteria

The ten criteria assessed in the writing task are:

- Audience
- Text structure
- Ideas
- Character and setting
- Vocabulary
- Cohesion
- Paragraphing
- Sentence structure
- Punctuation
- Spelling

The following table shows criteria and the range of score points for the writing task.

Audience	Text structure	Ideas	Character and setting	Vocab.	Cohesion	Paragraphing	Sentence structure	Punctuation	Spelling
0–6	0–4	0–5	0–4	0–5	0–4	0–2	0–6	0–5	0–6

Using this marking guide

The top of each page shows the **criterion name and number**. The **skill focus** defines the underlying skill being assessed.

The **category descriptor** is a broad statement describing the particular skill level. This is an overall statement which should be used to make the judgement.

Additional information is included to help shape the judgement. However, this information should not be read as an exhaustive list.

Notes at the bottom of the page provide clarifying detail where necessary.

Sample scripts are listed which exemplify the standard for a particular score (the number in brackets is the page reference). The script and annotations supporting the score are organised in the middle section of the marking guide.

A **glossary** of terms used in the rubric is provided after the exemplars.

A list of **spelling words** is included at the back of the guide. This list should be used in conjunction with the spelling criterion page. The list is not exhaustive.

Before beginning the Writing test, all students are given a coloured Writing test stimulus sheet and are read the following instructions:

Today you will do a *Writing* test.

In this test you are going to write a narrative. Narratives are also called stories.

You have to write a story about the topic. You can use the ideas from this stimulus sheet or you can use your own ideas about this. Look at the pictures and the words to help you with your ideas.

In 2009 information will be collected during marking on whether students wrote on the assigned topic by way of a 0,1 criterion recorded by markers. Comprehensive training in how to assess whether a student was 'on topic' or not will be provided to all markers in all Australian marking centres prior to the commencement of marking.

1

Audience

Skill focus: The writer's capacity to orient, engage and affect the reader.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	– symbols or drawings which have the intention of conveying meaning		Role play writer (17)
1	– contains some simple written content		Dungaun (19)
2	– shows awareness of basic audience expectations through the use of simple narrative markers	Simple narrative markers may include: – simple titles – formulaic story opening: <i>Long, long ago ...</i> <i>Once a boy was walking when ...</i> – description of people or places	The casel (23) BMX (25) Fier brething dragen (27) Living dead (29) A most unusual sight (31)
3	– an internally consistent story that attempts to support the reader by developing a shared understanding of context	– contains sufficient information for the reader to follow the story fairly easily	Woodern box (33) October 16, 1981 (37) Zip (39) The shade whispered (81) Rugby league cup (85)
4	– supports reader understanding – attempts to engage the reader	Narrative devices may include: – fantasy, humour, suspense – sub-genre styles (e.g. satire, boys' own, chick lit) – intertextual references	Space Tour (43) The haunted house (45) Exhilarating (47) Gambat (51)
5	– supports and engages the reader through deliberate choice of language and use of narrative devices	Language choices may: – control writer/reader relationship – reveal values and attitudes – establish narrator stance – subvert expectations	Tracy (53) Best friends (57) Lovely purple boots (61)
6	– caters to the anticipated values and expectations of the reader – influences or affects the reader through precise and sustained choice of language and use of narrative devices	– evoke an emotional response – encourage reflection – display irony	The Water Tower (65) In the distance (69) Axe (73) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)

Text structure

Skill focus: The organisation of narrative features including orientation, complication and resolution into an appropriate and effective text structure.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – no evidence of any structural components of a time-sequenced text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – symbols or drawings – inappropriate genre, e.g. a recipe 	Role play writer (17)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – minimal evidence of narrative structure, e.g. a story beginning only or a 'middle' with no orientation – a recount of events with no complication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – note that not all recounts are factual 	Dungaun (19) The casel (23) BMX (25) Fier brething dragen (27) A most unusual sight (31) Zip (39) Space Tour (43) Rugby league cup (85)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – contains a beginning and a complication – where a resolution is present it is weak, contrived or 'tacked on' (e.g. <i>I woke up, I died, They lived happily ever after</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A complication presents a problem to be solved, introduces tension, and requires a response. It drives the story forward and leads to a series of events or responses. – Complications should always be read in context. – may also be a complete story where all parts of the story are weak or minimal (The story has a problem to be solved it does not add to the tension or excitement) 	Living dead (29) Woodern box (33) The shade whispered (81)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – contains orientation, complication and resolution – detailed longer text may resolve one complication and lead into a new complication or layer a new complication onto an existing one rather than conclude 	<p>Sophisticated structures or plot devices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – foreshadowing/flashback – red herring/cliff-hanger 	October 16, 1981 (37) The haunted house (45) Exhilarating (47) Gambat (51) Tracy (53) Best friends (57) Lovely purple boots (61)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – coherent, controlled and complete narrative, employing effective plot devices in an appropriate structure, and including an effective ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – coda/twist – evaluation/reflection – circular/parallel plots 	The Water Tower (65) In the distance (69) Axe (73) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)

3

Ideas

Skill focus: The creation, selection and crafting of ideas for a narrative.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – no evidence or insufficient evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – symbols or drawings 	Role play writer (17)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ideas are very few and very simple – ideas appear unrelated 		Dungaun (19) The case! (23) BMX (25)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ideas are few, not elaborated or very predictable 		Fier brething dragen (27) Living dead (29) A most unusual sight (31)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ideas show some development or elaboration – all ideas relate coherently to a central storyline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – some ideas may contain unnecessary elaboration (waffle) 	Woodern box (33) October 16, 1981 (37) Zip (39) Space Tour (43) The haunted house (45) Exhilerating (47) Tracy (53) The shade whispered (81) Rugby league cup (85)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ideas are substantial and elaborated – ideas effectively contribute to a central storyline – the story contains a suggestion of an underlying theme 		Gambat (51) Best friends (57)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ideas are generated, selected and crafted to explore a recognisable theme – ideas are skilfully used in the service of the storyline 	Ideas may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – psychological subjects – unexpected topics – mature viewpoints – elements of popular culture – satirical perspectives – extended metaphor – traditional sub-genre subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>heroic quest</i> <i>whodunit</i> <i>good vs evil</i> <i>overcoming the odds</i> 	Lovely purple boots (61) The Water Tower (65) In the distance (69) Axe (73) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)

Character and setting

Skill focus: Character: The portrayal and development of character.

Setting: The development of a sense of place, time and atmosphere.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – no evidence or insufficient evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – symbols or drawings 	Role play writer (17)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – only names characters or gives their roles (e.g. <i>father, the teacher, my friend, dinosaur, we, Jim</i>) <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – only names the setting: (e.g. <i>school, the place we were at</i>) <p>Setting is vague or confused</p>		<p>Dungaun (19)</p> <p>The casel (23)</p> <p>BMX (25)</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – suggestion of characterisation through brief descriptions or speech or feelings, but lacks substance or continuity <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – suggestion of setting through very brief and superficial descriptions of place and/or time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – basic dialogue or a few adjectives to describe a character or a place 	<p>Living dead (29)</p> <p>October 16, 1981 (37)</p> <p>Space Tour (43)</p> <p>Rugby league cup (85)</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – characterisation emerges through descriptions, actions, speech or the attribution of thoughts and feelings to a character <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – setting emerges through description of place, time and atmosphere 		<p>Fier brething dragen (27)</p> <p>A most unusual sight (31)</p> <p>Woodern box (33)</p> <p>Zip (39)</p> <p>The haunted house (45)</p> <p>Exhilarating (47)</p> <p>Gambat (51)</p> <p>Tracy (53)</p> <p>The shade whispered (81)</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – effective characterisation. Details are selected to create distinct characters. <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – maintains a sense of setting throughout. Details are selected to create a sense of place and atmosphere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – convincing dialogue, introspection and reactions to other characters 	<p>Best friends (57)</p> <p>Lovely purple boots (61)</p> <p>The Water Tower (65)</p> <p>In the distance (69)</p> <p>Axe (73)</p> <p>The Deep Blue Nothing (77)</p>

NOTES

Characterisation and setting are essential components of effective narrative writing. The inclusion of the AND/OR category is necessary as different types of stories may focus on only one aspect.

Some stories may be character-driven (e.g. *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren) and the setting may be very sketchy or undeveloped. Other stories, which attempt to build atmosphere and suspense, may focus on setting the scene (e.g. the wild west genre) with little character detail. Many stories will have a balance of these two components.

5

Vocabulary

Skill focus: The range and precision of language choices.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	– symbols or drawings		Role play writer (17)
1	– very short script	few content words	Dungaun (19) BMX (25)
2	– mostly simple verbs, adverbs, adjectives or nouns – may include two or three precise words	– single words: <i>quick, big, run, look, red, cold, water, great, man, soft, need, really, very, beautiful, scream, grab, huge, think</i> – simple groups: <i>My big warm bed; It looked like a bright green lizard; A five headed, six armed monster</i> – simple figurative language: <i>as big as a house</i>	The casel (23) Living dead (29) A most unusual sight (31) Woodern box (33) October 16, 1981 (37)
3	– precise words or word groups (may be verbs, adverbs, adjectives or nouns)	– single precise words: <i>hissed, yanked, clutched, absolutely, disgusted, exhilarating, rewarded, eventually</i> – effective simile: <i>... into a porthole-like trap; Burning coal shot out like tiny bullets</i> – metaphor: <i>... lungs screamed for air</i>	Fier breathing dragen (27) Zip (39) Space Tour (43) The haunted house (45) Exhilarating (47) The shade whispered (81) Rugby league cup (85)
4	– sustained and consistent use of precise words and phrases that enhance the meaning or mood	– attitudinal: <i>simpered</i> – evaluative: <i>devout, aggressive, hard-done by</i> – technical: <i>resuscitated</i> – formal: <i>To what do I owe this honour?</i>	Gambat (51) Tracy (53) Best friends (57) Lovely purple boots (61) The Water Tower (65)
5	– a range of precise and effective words and phrases used in a natural and articulate manner Language choice is well matched to genre.	– colloquial language for characters' speech: <i>Watcha doin?</i> – alliteration: <i>... completely captivating cat called Clarence</i> – effective personification <i>... the wind clutched at her hair</i>	In the distance (69) Axe (73) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)

NOTES

Words are generally categorised into two classes:

Content words (or lexical items) describe objects and concepts. This class of words consists of nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, noun groups, phrasal verbs and verb groups.

Grammatical word classes (or structural words) consist of prepositions, articles, conjunctions, pronouns and interjections.

Cohesion

Skill focus: The control of multiple threads and relationships over the whole text, achieved through the use of referring words, substitutions, word associations and text connectives.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – symbols or drawings 		Role play writer (17)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – links are missing or incorrect – short script <p>Often confusing for the reader.</p>		Dungaun (19) The casel (23) BMX (25)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – some correct links between sentences (do not penalise for poor punctuation) – most referring words are accurate <p>Reader may occasionally need to re-read and provide their own links to clarify meaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – small selection of simple connectives and conjunctions used: <i>then, soon, and, but, or, then, suddenly, so, and then, when</i>, ordinal numbers, only temporal connectives – often marked by cumbersome repetition of nouns or unreferenced pronouns 	Fier breathing dragen (27) Living dead (29) A most unusual sight (31) Woodern box (33) October 16, 1981 (37) Zip (39)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cohesive devices are used correctly to support reader understanding – accurate use of referring words <p>Meaning is clear and text flows well in a sustained piece of writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – other connectives used: <i>later, meanwhile, instead, in the middle of, earlier, just as, usually, although, even though, such as, because, finally</i> – word association to avoid repetition, e.g. synonyms, antonyms, word sets, control of narrative tense 	Space Tour (43) The haunted house (45) Exhilarating (47) Gambat (51) Tracy (53) Best friends (57) The shade whispered (81) Rugby league cup (85)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a range of cohesive devices is used correctly and deliberately to enhance reading <p>An extended, highly cohesive piece of writing showing continuity of ideas and tightly linked sections of text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – consistent use of word associations and substitutions that enhance reading 	Lovely purple boots (61) The Water Tower (65) In the distance (69) Axe (73) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)

7

Paragraphing

Skill focus: The segmenting of text into paragraphs that assists the reader to negotiate the narrative.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	no use of paragraphing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – script is a block of text – random breaks – new line for every sentence – new line for new speaker with no other paragraphing evident 	<p>Role play writer (17) Dungaun (19) The casel (23) BMX (25) Fier brething dragen (27) Living dead (29) A most unusual sight (31) Woodern box (33) Exhilerating (47)</p>
1	writing is organised into paragraphs that are mainly focused on a single idea or set of like ideas that assist the reader to digest chunks of text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – paragraphs used to separate the introduction or conclusion from the body of the narrative (2 paragraphs) – paragraphs used to mark formulaic narrative structure (beginning, middle and end). – indicates broad changes in time and scene or time ordered structure 	<p>October 16, 1981 (37) Zip (39) Space Tour (43) The haunted house (45) Gambat (51) Tracy (53) The shade whispered (81) Rugby league cup (85)</p>
2	all paragraphs are focused on one idea or set of like ideas and enhance the narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – deliberately structured to pace and direct the reader's attention – single sentence may be used as a dramatic or final comment or for emphasis 	<p>Best friends (57) Lovely purple boots (61) The Water Tower (65) In the distance (69) Axe (73) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)</p>

NOTES

For the purposes of the task, paragraphing can be indicated by any of the following conventions:

- indentation of a new line
- space between blocks of text
- student annotations, e.g. P for paragraph, tram lines, square brackets, asterisk
- available space on previous line left unused, followed by new line for paragraph beginning.

Sentence structure

Skill focus: The production of grammatically correct, structurally sound and meaningful sentences.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	– no evidence of sentences	– drawings, symbols, a list of words, text fragments	Role play writer (17)
1	– some correct formation of sentences Some meaning can be construed.	– in general, control is very limited	Dungaun (19) The casel (23) BMX (25)
2	– most simple sentences are correct Meaning is predominantly clear.	– correct sentences are predominantly simple	Fier breathing dragen (27) Living dead (29) A most unusual sight (31)
3	– most simple and compound sentences correct – some complex sentences are correct Meaning is predominantly clear.	– experiments with complexity	Woodern box (33) October 16, 1981 (37) The shade whispered (81) Rugby league cup (85)
4	– simple and compound sentences are correct – most complex sentences are correct OR All sentences correct but do not demonstrate variety Meaning is clear.	– greater control of complex sentences but lacks variety – allow for an occasional ‘typo’ in simple or compound sentences	Zip (39) Space Tour (43) The haunted house (45) Exhilarating (47) Gambat (51) Tracy (53) Lovely purple boots (61)
5	– sentences correct (allow for occasional typo, e.g. a missing word) – demonstrates variety in length, structure and beginnings Meaning is clear and sentences enhance meaning.	VARIETY – clause types and patterns (verbless, adjectival, adverbial, multiple dependencies, non-finite) – dependent clause position – length and rhythm – lexical density: increased with elaborating and extending phrases, or reduced to the essential	Best friends (57) Axe (73)
6	– all sentences are correct Writing contains controlled and well-developed sentences that express precise meaning and are consistently effective.	– stylistically appropriate choices	The Water Tower (65) In the distance (69) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)

NOTES

- Some students do not accurately identify their sentence boundaries with punctuation. In these cases it will be necessary to read the *intended* sentence. Run-on sentences should not be regarded as successful (overly repeated ‘and’, ‘so’ etc).
- Verb control and preposition errors should be considered as sentence errors.

9

Punctuation

Skill focus: The use of correct and appropriate punctuation to aid reading of the text.

NOTE: ‘Splice’ commas used to join two sentences are INCORRECT. (E.g. *The dog ate my homework, it was hungry.*) Do not score these as correct sentence punctuation or comma use.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	– no evidence of correct punctuation	<p>Sentence punctuation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – capital letters to begin sentences – full stops to end sentences – question marks to end sentences – exclamation marks to end sentences 	<p>Role play writer (17) Dungaun (19) The casel (23)</p>
1	– some correct use of capital letters to start sentences OR full stops to end sentences Punctuation is minimal and of little assistance to the reader.	<p>Noun capitalisation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – first names and surnames – titles: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms etc. – place names: Paris, Italy – institution names: Valley High – days of week, months of year – street names: Ord St – book and film titles – holidays: Easter, Ramadan – historic events: World War II 	<p>BMX (25) Fier breathing dragon (27)</p>
2	– some accurately punctuated sentences (beginning and end) – some noun capitalisation where applicable Provides some markers to assist reading.	<p>Other punctuation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – apostrophes to mark contractions – commas in lists – commas to mark clauses/phrases – apostrophes to mark possession – correct hyphenation of compound words – quotation marks for direct speech – capital letters and commas used within quotation marks – new line for each speaker 	<p>Living dead (29) Woodern box (33) October 16, 1981 (37) Gambat (51) The shade whispered (81) Rugby league cup (85)</p>
3	– some correct punctuation across categories (sentences mostly correct with some other punctuation correct) OR – accurate sentence punctuation with no stray capitals, nothing else used Provides adequate markers to assist reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – quotation marks for text extracts and highlighted words – brackets and dashes – brackets to signal humorous asides – colons and semicolons – points of ellipsis – commas or semicolons to balance or create rhythm between clauses 	<p>A most unusual sight (31) Space Tour (43) The haunted house (45)</p>
4	– all sentence punctuation correct – mostly correct use of other punctuation Provides accurate markers to enable smooth and efficient reading.		<p>Zip (39) Exhilarating (47) Tracy (53) Best friends (57) The Water Tower (65) Axe (73)</p>
5	writing contains accurate use of all applicable punctuation Provides precise markers to pace and control reading of the text.		<p>Lovely purple boots (61) In the distance (69) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)</p>

NOTES

In first draft writing, allowances can be made for the very occasional omission of sentence punctuation at scores 4 and 5. ‘Mostly’ is approximately 80% but it is not intended that every use of punctuation is calculated rigorously.

Spelling

Skill focus: The accuracy of spelling and the difficulty of the words used.

	Category descriptor	Additional information	Sample scripts
0	no conventional spelling	Simple words Short vowel single-syllable words (<i>bad, fit, not</i>) with: – consonant digraphs (<i>shop, thin, much, chips</i>) – consonant blends (<i>drop, clap, grass, bring</i>) – double final consonants (<i>will, less</i>)	Role play writer (17)
1	few examples of conventional spelling	High frequency long vowel single-syllable words (<i>name, park, good, school, feet, food</i>)	Dungaun (19)
2	correct spelling of – most simple words – some common words (errors evident in common words)	Common words Single-syllable words with: – harder two consonant blends (<i>crack, square</i>) – three consonant blends (<i>stretch, catch, strung</i>) – common long vowels (<i>face, sail, eight, mean, nice, fly, coke, use, close, again</i>) Multi-syllabic words with even stress patterns (<i>middle, litter, plastic, between, hospital</i>) Compound words (<i>downstairs</i>) Common homophones (<i>there/their, write/right, hear/here, brake/break</i>) Suffixes that don't change the base word (<i>jumped, sadly, adults, happening</i>) Common words with silent letters (<i>know, wrong, comb</i>) Single-syllable words ending in <i>ould, ey, ough</i> Most rule-driven words: drop e, double letter, change y to i (<i>having, spitting, heavier</i>)	The casel (23) BMX (25) Fier brething dragen (27) Woodern box (33)
3	correct spelling of – most simple words – most common words		Living dead (29) A most unusual sight (31) The shade whispered (81)
4	correct spelling of – simple words – most common words – some difficult words (errors do not outnumber correct spellings)	Difficult words Uneven stress patterns in multi-syllabic words (<i>chocolate, mineral</i>) Uncommon vowel patterns (<i>drought, hygiene</i>) Difficult subject-specific content words (<i>obese</i>) Difficult homophones (<i>practice/practise</i>) Suffixes where base word changes (<i>generate/generation</i>) Consonant alteration patterns (<i>confident/confidence</i>) Many three and four syllable words (<i>invisible, organise, community</i>) Multi-syllabic words ending in <i>tion, sion, ture, ible/able, ent/ant, ful</i>	October 16, 1981 (37) Zip (39) The haunted house (45) Exhilarating (47) Tracy (53) Lovely purple boots (61) Rugby league cup (85)
5	correct spelling of – simple words – most common words – at least 10 difficult words (errors do not outnumber correct spellings)		Space Tour (43) Gambat (51) Best friends (57) In the distance (69) Axe (73)
6	correct spelling of – all words – at least 10 difficult words – some challenging words NOTE: As the work is first draft writing, allowances can be made for very occasional (1 or 2) minor errors, which should be disregarded when assigning this category.	Challenging words Unusual consonant patterns (<i>guarantee</i>) Longer words with unstressed syllables (<i>responsibility</i>) Vowel alteration patterns (<i>brief to brevity, propose to proposition</i>) Foreign words Suffixes to words ending in e, c or l (<i>physically, changeable, completely</i>)	The Water Tower (65) The Deep Blue Nothing (77)